2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

was customary for the clan to meet in the clan leader's lodge and make provisions for the accumulation of goods to be used in the rites. It was believed that a successful ceremony with an abundance of gifts to be given away brought credit to the entire clan.

Moieties were in theory exogamous, but they had ceased to regulate marriage after 1837. Scattercorn explained that, while the Mandan considered those who sat on the same side in the Okipa or in council as brothers, it was considered better to marry into a clan of the same moiety than to marry outside the tribe. Marriages within the clan were disapproved.

The clan was a property-holding group. The major bundles of the Okipa ceremony were held in the WaxikEna clan, which also owned the sacred cedar and controlled the Okipa lodge and sacred turtles. Traditionally, the Shell Robe bundle belonged in the Prairie Chicken clan. Eagle-trapping lodges belonged to the clan of the member building it and remained in the clan when the original owner died. There were two bundles for the Big Bird ceremonies which were known as Black Medicine bundle and Sweet Medicine bundle. The former was inherited in the Prairie Chicken clan and the latter in the Speckled Eagle clan of the same moiety. Each clan was the theoretical custodian of one variety of corn. The WaxikEna clan was custodian of the bluish-green flint corn; the Tamisik had the red corn; the Prairie Chicken had the yellow flint and dent; the Speckled Eagle had the rainbow corn. Crows Heart stated that Hides-and-Eats, an old woman who lived in his lodge, told him that, when she was young, people of one clan were not permitted to raise corn belonging to the other clans without first securing the rights and that each clan claimed to be the preserver of its own corn.

It was the duty of the clan to assist its own members. It was the clan's duty to care for its old people having no blood children. During the smallpox epidemic of 1837, women went through the villages and gathered the orphans of their clan, who were taken into their lodges to be reared. Old people were invited in to be fed and clothed by younger members of their own clan. When returning from a successful hunt, young men would offer meat to the old people who met them at the outskirts of the village. One was expected to offer meat to old people of the same clan without being asked for it.

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The clan was the medium for the transfer of property when a family died out without leaving descendants. When an individual died, leaving no relatives, the clan took possession of the property. The lodge was occupied by females of the same clan or could be sold to women of a different clan. It was the duty of the clan to assist a female member in repairing or building her lodge and to put up property for one of its number who was inviting the opposite moiety to assist in building a new lodge. The clan owned certain names which belonged within the clan and were not sold outside the clan.

The clans extended through all the villages of the tribe and were in part equated with Hidatsa clans. Both tribes had a Prairie Chicken clan; the Mandan WaxikEna was the equivalent of the Hidatsa Maxoxati; the Tamisik was the equivalent of the Hidatsa Metsiroka. The Hidatsa also had a few people of the Speckled Eagle clan who were said to be of Mandan origin.[4]

It was the duty of the clan to revenge the killing of one of its members. In the event of the murder of one of its number, the murderer would attempt to escape to the Crow, since the Hidatsa would not protect a murderer from the Mandan villages for fear of war between the two tribes.

The clan assisted at the death of a son. They prepared the body for the scaffold and sent the spirit away. It was also the duty of the father's clan to bring the skull of one dying away from the village back for disposal. Feasts were given to the members of the father's clan, and help was asked of individual members by those contemplating war expeditions. Men of the father's clan inserted the thongs for a faster. The permanent

4. The Hidatsa give a different account of the origin of this clan. Mrs. Bears Arm, a member of the clan, stated that there was a Mandan woman of the Prairie Chicken clan who was childless. She was a hard worker and had large gardens. One morning when she went to her gardens she noticed that someone had been hoeing the corn. She inquired in the village if someone had been working in her garden and could find none who had been working there. She went out before daylight to see who it was. Several whitetail deer were working in the garden. They ran away when they saw the woman. As they disappeared, she heard one say, "I left my baby there." The baby was a speckled eagle. She took the baby home to rear as her own and wanted the child to belong to the Prairie Chicken clan, but the others would not agree to it, since the child came of a different source. The child grew up and had children who were known as speckled eagles. While living below the Knife River, men of the Awaxawi village married a few girls of that clan and brought them to their own village to live. The group is treated as a lineage of the Hidatsa Prairie Chicken clan.

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meanwhile her parents frequently made arrangements to bring them to the daughter's parental lodge to live. They constructed a side passage from the door so that the son-in-law could enter his section of the lodge without meeting his mother-in-law, and he was expected to remain in his quarters when she was in the lodge. When the lodge was ready, the girl's father presented her husband with a horse or other goods and invited them to live with them.

When a man married the oldest sister, he was entitled to marry the younger ones as they became of age by giving them horses. Her parents built additional beds in the son-in-law's section. There was no wedding feast or exchange of goods.

A third method of marrying was known as "marriage by mutual agreement." Two people attracted to each other decided to marry without consulting their parents. Sometimes a girl did not approve of her sisters' husband and decided not to marry him. She encouraged a young man so that she could get away from her mother's household. She received two or three horses from her husband and left her parents to live in her husband's lodge. If she had a number of sisters and did not like their husband, she would remain in her husband's lodge and help the women of the household. Whether or not this residence became permanent depended on a number of factors. When the lodge was already occupied by her husband's sisters and their husband, she would attempt to move out with her husband to a household of old women of her clan, especially one where there were no men to provide for the household. Eventually she would inherit the lodge, household goods, and gardens when the old people died. On the other hand, should her husband have no sisters, she would prefer to care for her parents-in-law, whom she treated as "grandparents" and addressed as such, and they would treat her as a woman of the lodge. When they died, she would inherit the lodge, household goods, and gardens.

As a resident of the husband's lodge, a woman's position was subordinate to the other female members of the household group. In case of a quarrel, she was obliged to leave. Should her husband be killed or die, leaving small children and his brother was unable to marry her because of an unco-operative wife, she was sent out of the lodge and was permitted to take

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

592 768 421 only her clothing and children. Even the bedding belonged with the lodge and could not be taken whether she had assisted in tanning and preparing them or not. Responsibility for the children's care rested with her sisters and the female members of her clan.

586 837 578 431 583 Divorce was easy and common. The elopement of a married woman having children with a married man also having children was the cause of much trouble, since it involved so many people. Learning that their brother had eloped with another man's wife, the brothers and sisters would take horses and other property to the injured man to prevent him from causing them injury, since they were accountable for a sibling's conduct. Learning that his wife had run away with another man, he was entitled to retaliate against the man's brothers and sisters and would start killing their horses. My Mandan informants enjoyed relating instances when the brothers and sisters, learning that a brother had eloped with another man's wife, had reached the lodge before the wife was missed. They would come to his lodge in a group leading the horses. Seeing the people with horses, he would hurry into his lodge or go through the village calling for his wife. People considered it very humorous to surprise a man in that way, and it was the subject of gossip for quite a while. He was expected to accept the horses and forget his wife. The elopers usually visited the Crow Indians until 586 837 578 583 the husband was reconciled to his loss. When a prominent man lost his wife, he would usually organize a war party or go out alone against the enemy. He could disregard his former wife, and those most concerned with public opinion usually did. However, a man of position usually called her into his lodge when she returned from her elopement, painted and dressed her, mounted her on a good horse, and took her back to her new husband. Those who cried because a wife eloped or who attempted to take her back or agreed to let her return if she requested it were considered weaklings and not worthy of respect. Bear on the Water, a Mandan, stole the young Arikara wife of Four Bears, the principal war chief of the Hidatsa. While they were away, Four Bears made so many threats that the Mandan were obliged to leave the village for fear of war. He refused to accept horses or to smoke the pipe with Bear on

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

This account of a summer buffalo hunt illustrates the position of an individual in his relations to the remainder of the village. As a young man first assisting in a summer buffalo hunt he received his training from those older and more experienced; he advanced by degrees, and his responsibilities increased until, as leader of the village when on the hunt, he was responsible for the well-being of the entire village group of which he was a part. It will be shown in the pages that follow that whereas an individual would, in one situation be the leader over his entire village, in other situations he would be a follower and others would be responsible for the group's success.

Men specialized in certain activities. Whereas some were leaders of buffalo hunts, fish-trapping, war expeditions, or various ceremonies, others specialized as singers, painters, arrowmakers, or storytellers. In Mandan society, a man or woman seeking information, however trivial, was expected to make a payment for the information acquired. Persons possessing unique information and techniques were highly regarded, and it would have been considered ill mannered to adopt another's skills without at first paying for that right, however well the individual may have been able to perform without this paid training. One was also said to be inviting bad luck by practicing arts for which payment had not been made.

Payment for training was so highly developed in Mandan society that a young woman assisting her mother in the making of clay pots would prepare a simple feast to which the females of the household were invited in order to receive the right to assist in the making of pots and to make vessels of her own after her mother had died. Within the family group the payments were usually insignificant so far as the value of the goods was concerned. It was felt that the small payment in goods expressed the young woman's respect for her mother. The Mandan also believed that payments expressed societal values. The mother would explain each step in pottery-making, the selection of the clay and grit, the molding of the mass, the introduction of decorations, and the drying and baking of the vessels. Mandan vessels had a variety of decorations, and the person buying the right to make pottery acquired only the right to employ such decorations as the mother had a right to use. If she wished to

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utilize other decorations, she was obliged to seek another woman entitled to make the particular decoration and buy the right of her.

There was a similar specialization for men. When a young man was found to have an especially good voice which was heard above the others in the songs of the society dances, he was encouraged to buy singer rights in dances of both a sacred and a secular character. Although they were obliged to make payments either to existing singers or to the owners of bundles, their rewards far exceeded the initial costs. Their training included information relative to the ceremonies that were being performed, and they received recognition comparable to that shown those who had directed a number of successful war expeditions. In council, their authority was as great as those who had directed war parties, summer buffalo hunts, or eagle-trapping expeditions.

Those who could tattoo or paint designs appreciated by the people of the village were highly regarded and received a considerable amount of goods for their services. There were usually at least two skilled painters in each village, and they were expected to belong to opposite moieties. A man of one moiety would go to a man of the other moiety to have a robe, shield, or clothing painted either according to his particular inclination or with specific designs of things dreamed of. Each warrior had one or more shields made of buffalo hide taken from around the neck, and these were used universally by the Mandan for protection against arrows and spears until guns became more universal. The designs were believed to offer supernatural protection, and their potency was considered to be enhanced when the design was painted by a man of the opposite moiety, since there would be a payment to the "father" who would pray for the "son's" success. These painters were held responsible for the proper painting of the characters represented in the Okipa and received much property for their services. If they were otherwise sensible men, they enjoyed the same status as those who had been successful in other pursuits.

The arrowmakers were highly regarded. Although all males usually made arrows, some were employed specially for arrow-making. These were the older men of the lodge who had passed

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the prime of life and others who, having been crippled either in warfare, hunting, or other active pursuits, were unable to carry out the work normally performed by men. The older men of the lodge usually made the arrows used by the men of the household, and ten arrows complete with heads and feathers had the value of one unpainted robe. Young men of the lodge paid the older men for the right to learn the techniques of arrowmaking. The Mandan in 1929 remembered two men who had been crippled, one when his leg was broken by a wounded buffalo, the other who had had a femur bone shattered by a bullet and who had spent much of their time preparing arrows which they sold.

Another class of people who were highly regarded were the storytellers. The art of storytelling was highly developed; the stories had a variety of themes and were highly formalized. One paying for the right to have a story told was expected to repeat the story after the informer until it was learned in complete detail. The customary way of buying the story was to have a feast and a supply of tobacco mixed with red willow bark prepared before calling the informer in to relate his stories. The stories were of a semisacred character, and many dealt with the exploits of distinguished persons who had once lived in the village or tribe. It was considered improper to relate sacred myths belonging to others unless the informer was an owner in the particular rites, in which instance the buyer was expected to have enough robes and other goods so that each person having rights in the story would receive pay even when only one of their member was relating the story. The actual storytelling was then held at a later time when the informant could be alone with his pupil.

There was considerable traditional lore not actually associated with any ceremony at the time this study was being made. Informants were of the opinion that these myths once were associated with bundle rites now extinct and that the stories had continued as common property of the tribe. These stories have to do with such mythological characters as Corn Silk, Buffalo, First Creator, and the Snakes. Both men and women were storytellers, and they were highly respected as possessors of important tribal lore. They enjoyed intimate con-

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

hunting. Women holding rights in the various Holy Women bundles also met whenever a medicine feast was given. Their rights were individually acquired by assisting their husbands or brothers in the bundle purchase. Some of their number were members of the Goose or the White Buffalo Cow societies.

The older people performed an important role in the ceremonies so long as they were not too feeble to get around. Women who had assisted others at childbirth became doctors after the menopause and could substitute for a man in a great many of the societies. In many ceremonies they were the medium through which the traditions and bundles were transmitted to a legitimate male heir.

Fasting was generally completed by the time one reached fifty years of age. In case of repeated bad luck or failure to attain a definite goal, fasting for short periods was practiced during a ceremony. When an epidemic of sore eyes broke out at Fishhook Village, one old woman fasted to seek relief from her affliction. Since her eye trouble was cleared up shortly afterward, quite a number of middle-aged and old people fasted to cure the ailment. Calf Woman said that more than half of them got relief.

People who were past middle age and who had been relatively successful all their lives would frequently have bad dreams in which they were being killed and cut up by the enemy or were drowning. It was believed that one could forestall this misfortune by giving away all his property. He would call in those who had been successful and were owners of important tribal bundles to give away his property, consisting of robes and bedding, household utensils, dogs, and horses, until the family was utterly destitute. One doing this would walk through the village repeating the dream. When the bad dream failed to materialize within the designated time, such people were said to be holy and as such were called the "protectors of the village." In appreciation of their sacrifices, each household group was expected to contribute something toward their comfort.

The old people had privately owned game pits and were entitled to the animals found in them. According to tradition, before horses were acquired, pits were widely used and owned by households. Ruins of game pits are still to be seen in consider-

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

able numbers along the Heart River and in the vicinity of Square Butte Creek. With the introduction of the horse they were less commonly used, although the practice was not entirely abandoned until after 1870. Buffalo, deer, elk, and wolves were captured in them. Older men also managed the fish traps, of which there were a number for each village. An account of fish-trapping is given in chapter viii, "Catfish-trapping Ceremony," which appears in this account of ceremonialism.

The old people were generally well cared for by the Mandan. They were held in high respect, and my informants frequently condemned neighboring tribes for abandoning their old people. On the other hand, Mandan old people frequently were left back when the village went on a buffalo hunt and refused to have others remain with them, claiming that they would get along and that, if the enemy came and killed them, it was all right, as one could not live forever. Usually a few families remained in the village to care for the old people who were too feeble to travel.

The Mandan traditions state that, when people were first created and placed on the earth, Lone Man decreed that they should not live to be older than one hundred years and that some would die at various ages from birth to old age. It was believed that people died from improper fasting, violation of tribal custom, disrespect of holy things, quarreling, foreign objects in the body, and loss of "power." It was also believed that those who neglected the unfortunate would not live long, since the sacred things frequently sent destitute people into the tribe to detect the selfish families. The sun was believed to be a cannibal who would adopt a "son" in an enemy tribe, subsequently giving a Mandan a dream instruction to go out on the warfare where he would be killed.

The Mandan believed that a person had four souls. One was the white spirit, which was often seen traveling through the air as a shooting star. It was regarded as the principal spirit and was represented by the white upland sage. The second spirit was light brown and scarcely visible and was represented by the meadow lark. These two spirits united in the spirit world and became the individual of the hereafter. The third spirit was known as the lodge spirit and remained near the lodge of which

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

trusted to the WaxikEna clan, who could take any articles left at the cedar as an offering for their own use. The amount of goods placed at the cedar during a year was considerable, since sometime during the performance of every ceremony and age-grade society dance a visit was made to the cedar to ask the blessings of Lone Man, and some article of value was placed there. In the case of strictly winter ceremonies held in the winter camp where a cedar was never erected, offerings frequently were not made to the cedar. The cedar together with the surrounding wall and willow band was called Minimi'tahEdE, meaning "the retreat of the waters."

In theory, goods deposited at the cedar became the property of any member of the WaxikEna clan who happened to be passing by. In practice, however, the goods finally reached the old men and women of that clan. Those appropriating too much goods for personal use lost status in the village. Those living near the cedar had an advantage over those more distantly removed in reaching the goods first. Apparently there was no tendency to take the offerings away at once. Scattercorn told how a very beautiful robe hung on the wall several days before a man removed it and then not until a number of people had gathered there and to whom he announced that he had observed that a feeble clan brother was in need of a new robe since the one he was then wearing was shabby.

Each fixed village unit had its own complete set of officers. Crows Heart explained that the tribe was formerly divided into a number of fixed bands, each one occupying one or more villages. His mother belonged to the Is'topa ("Those Who Tattooed Themselves"). There were also the Nuptadi, Ma'nana'rE[7] ("Those Who Quarreled"), Awigaxa,[8] and Nuitadi. Each of

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At the north side she sang:

o-ta'-nu-mą-kE — masa'numąkE
mi-ka-xo' — na'mini (three)
EhE'nakahoc

At the south side she sang:

ota'numąkE — masa'numąkE
mikaxo' — to'pa (four)
EhE'nakahoc.

7. Other informants thought that the Mananada was not a fixed band but any small group who separated from a principal village when quarrels occurred.

8. According to tradition, this group lived near the Grand River until late prehistoric times and did not practice the Okipa until they moved to the Painted Woods

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

food or water and to participate in the torture features. After the Mandan united with the Hidatsa at Like-a-Fishhook Village, there were usually as many Hidatsas as Mandans fasting, but the moiety arrangement of fasters was observed. In fact, Hidatsas gave the ceremony as often as Mandans at this time.

The turtle drums remained in the lodges of their custodians during the first day of the ceremony. These turtles were considered tribal property in the larger sense, and the WaxikEna clan were their custodians. WaxikEna clansmen paid to hold custodianship which could be revoked by clan action. Individuals of the WaxikEna clan were willing to buy the right to keep them when the Okipa was not being performed, otherwise they remained in the Okipa lodge under the charge of the old man living there. Keepers of the turtles treated them like other medicine bundles, making feasts for them and praying to them on various occasions.

At sunset the Lone Man impersonator dressed up in his ceremonial outfit and went for the turtles. While the Mandan were living in two villages near Fort Clark, the turtles were kept at Nuptadi Village. He went to the owner of the big turtle, the leader of the turtles, and asked him for this turtle first. It was believed that he could predict the abundance of buffaloes through the year by the weight of the turtle drums for, it was said, that the turtles were heavy when the buffalo herds were going to be near the village. People were not allowed to cross his trail when he carried the turtles to the Okipa lodge. The three turtles replaced the rolled-up hide as drums that evening. Everyone awaited word from inside the Okipa lodge concerning the weight of the turtle drums. Soon after the turtles were in their places, the old man of the WaxikEna clan who was custodian of the Okipa lodge called through the village that "the turtles are very heavy and the buffaloes will be near the village so all the people can have enough to eat."

Each of the drummers continued through the ceremony, using the turtle drums. These drums were moved four times in the evening and reached the east side of the lodge at midnight, where they remained until sunrise.

Second day.—Before sunrise, young men not having an active part in the ceremony brought in green willow branches to be

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Chapter X

THE SMALL HAWK CEREMONY

796 778 ONLY the principal bundle belonging to this ceremony[1] remained in existence following the smallpox epidemic of 1837, although Scattercorn had heard that there had been a number of them formerly. The surviving bundle came from Mitutanka. The rites occupied a high place in the tribe's ceremonial life, and the small hawk, belonging to the bundle, was impersonated by one of the performers in the Okipa ceremony. The other bundle lines, of which there were said to have been several, were broken by the death of all eligible inheritors.

The single surviving bundle was owned by Berdache and her sister of the Tamisik clan and their husband of the WaxikEna clan. The latter two died after their daughters Calf Woman and Stands Yellow had married Hits on Back who had come to his wives' lodge to live. Hits on Back of the WaxikEna clan and his two wives bought the bundle from Berdache.[2] The bundle consisted of a sacred buffalo robe which traditionally came from Toad Earrings, mother of Buffalo Woman, a hide rattle representing Buffalo Woman, a gourd rattle representing Corn Silk, sage and magpie tail feathers representing membership in the Holy Woman Society, a stuffed hawk with blue shoulders and yellow spotted breast representing Split Wing Feathers and Looks Down To Hunt, a small ash digging stick, a wooden pipe, and a buffalo skull.

778 ●421 425 The bundle could be divided into two sections. One section consisted of the hawk, sage, hide rattle, pipe, and a buffalo skull and was transferable to a man of the WaxikEna clan, while the other section, the sacred robe, gourd rattle, sage, magpie and tail feathers, could be bought by the wife. Subdivided bundles seem to have soon lost their hereditary character. Each section

1. The bundle is known as the Sikaraxa bundle, referring to the small hawk or kite mentioned in the sacred myth.

2. This purchase illustrates the character of bundle purchase through the female line.

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

could be sold four times. The usual transfer was to sisters married to one man, in which instances the women acquired rights in the sacred robe and other paraphernalia of that section, and the husband took over the balance of the bundle. Such purchases were made only after several years of married life, as it was considered a sign of bad luck for common bundle-owners to quarrel. Crows Heart explained that having a common interest in a bundle was a powerful factor in making marriages permanent. Sale was not made until the parent-in-law taboo had been removed.

The prominence of these bundles is demonstrated by their representation in the Okipa ceremony. During the early summer all men owning primary and secondary rights in a Small Hawk ceremony met in one of their earth lodges to select two young men to represent their bundles in that summer's Okipa ceremony. Either young men of this group or men who were eligible to inherit a bundle were selected to dance in the ceremony and to receive goods offered to Small Hawk bundle-owners.

Women owning rights in the bundle were entitled to dress in the sacred robe, place sage and magpie tail feathers in the hair, and carry the ash digging stick at the close of the Okipa ceremony, when separate offerings were made to them by the Okipa Maker and his fellow-fasters and on other occasions when a feast was made to the bundle as a Buffalo-calling ceremony.

The rites are based on the exploits of Corn Silk, who visited the small hawk at his lodge on the eastern horizon where he lived with his mother. This small hawk, being a good hunter, taught the Buffalo-calling rites. Because he could produce thunder, he also introduced a rain-calling rite. His son, Looks Down To Hunt, inherited all his father's powers.

The holy robe and its rites have as their mythological origin Looks Down To Hunt's experiences on the northern horizon where he encountered his wife's mother who lived in a large earth lodge. After avoiding many hazards which she had set up to protect her people, the buffaloes, she was obliged to free these animals. The Mandan had many sacred robes, but each had its separate origin myth.

The myth throws light on the native theories of the universe. In one place Looks Down To Hunt asked the spider for his body

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
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the arcana of Indian superstitions; and that this little, seemingly wonderful, relic of antiquity, symbol of some grand event, or "secret too valuable to be told," might have been at last nothing but a silly bunch of strings and toys, to which they pay some great peculiar regard; giving thereby to some favourite Spirit or essence an ideal existence, and which, when called upon to describe, they refuse to do so, calling it "*Great Medicine*," for the very reason that there is nothing in it to reveal or describe.

Immediately under the little frame or scaffold described, and on the floor of the lodge was placed a knife, and by the side of it a bundle of splints or skewers, which were kept in readiness for the infliction of the cruelties directly to be explained. There were seen also, in this stage of the affair, a number of cords of rawhide hanging down from the top of the lodge, and passing through its roof, with which the young men were to be suspended by the splints passed through their flesh, and drawn up by men placed on the top of the lodge for the purpose, as will be described in a few moments.

There were also four articles of great veneration and importance lying on the floor of the lodge, which were sacks, containing in each some three or four gallons of water. These also were objects of superstitious regard, and made with great labour and much ingenuity; each one of them being constructed of the skin of the buffalo's neck, and most elaborately sewed together in the form of a large tortoise lying on its back, with a bunch of eagle's quills appended to it as a tail; and each of them having a stick, shaped like a drum-stick, lying on them, with which, in a subsequent stage of these ceremonies, as will be seen, they are beaten upon by several of their mystery-men, as a part of the music for their strange dances and mysteries. By the side of these sacks which they call *Eeh-teeh-ka*, are two other articles of equal importance, which they call *Eeh-na-dee* (rattles), in the form of a gourd-shell made also of dried skins, and used at the same time as the others, in the music (or rather *noise* and *din*) for their dances, &c.

These four sacks of water have the appearance of very great antiquity; and by enquiring of my very ingenious friend and patron, the *medicine-man*, after the ceremonies were over, he very gravely told me, that "those four tortoises contained the waters from the four quarters of the world—that these waters had been contained therein ever since the settling down of the waters!" I did not think it best to advance any argument against so ridiculous a theory, and therefore could not even enquire or learn, at what period they had been instituted, or how often, or on what occasions, the water in them had been changed or replenished.

I made several propositions, through my friend Mr. Kipp, the trader and interpreter, to purchase one of these strange things by offering them a very liberal price; to which I received in answer that these, and all the very numerous articles used in these ceremonies, being a *society property* were

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
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796 421 *medicine*, and could not be sold for any consideration; so I abandoned all thoughts of obtaining anything, except what I have done by the *medicine* operation of my pencil, which was applied to everything, and even upon that they looked with decided distrust and apprehension, as a sort of theft or sacrilege.

796 Such then was the group, and such the appearance of the interior of the medicine-lodge during the three first, and part of the fourth day also, of the Mandan religious ceremonies. The medicine-man with a group about him, of young aspirants who were under his sole controul, as was every article and implement to be used, and the sanctity of this solitary and gloomy looking place, which could not be trespassed upon by any man's presence without his most sovereign permission.

796 535 During the three first days of this solemn conclave, there were many very curious forms and amusements enacted in the open area in the middle of the village, and in front of the medicine-lodge, by other members of the community, one of which formed a material part or link of these strange ceremonials. This very curious and exceedingly grotesque part of their performance, which they denominated *Bel-lohck nah-pick* (the bull-dance) of which I have before spoken, as one of the avowed objects for which they held this annual fête; and to the strictest observance of which they attribute the coming of buffaloes to supply them with food during the season—is repeated four times during the first day, eight times on the second day, twelve times on the third day, and sixteen times on the fourth day; and always around the curb, or "*big canoe*," of which I have before spoken.

This subject I have selected for my second picture, and the principal actors in it were eight men, with the entire skins of buffaloes thrown over their backs, with the horns and hoofs and tails remaining on; their bodies in a horizontal position, enabling them to imitate the actions of the buffalo, whilst they were looking out of its eyes as through a mask (PLATE 67).

The bodies of these men were chiefly naked and all painted in the most extraordinary manner, with the nicest adherence to exact similarity; their limbs, bodies and faces, being in every part covered, either with black, red, or white paint. Each one of these strange characters had also a lock of buffalo's hair tied around his ancles—in his right hand a rattle, and a slender white rod or staff, six feet long, in the other; and carried on his back, a bunch of green willow boughs about the usual size of a bundle of straw. These eight men, being divided into four pairs, took their positions on the four different sides of the curb or big canoe, representing thereby the four cardinal points; and between each group of them, with the back turned to the big canoe, was another figure, engaged in the same dance, keeping step with them, with a similar staff or wand in one hand and a rattle in the other, and (being four in number) answering again to the four cardinal points. The bodies of these four young men were chiefly naked, with no other dress upon them than a beautiful kelt (or quartz-quaw), around the waist, made of eagles